**For Immediate Release**

Contact Name:

Contact Phone and Email:

**Aerial Applicators Committed to Flying Low and Flying Safe This Summer**

[CITY, STATE], [DATE] – Now that crops are in the ground, if you haven’t already, you may begin to hear the hum of an aircraft’s engine or see the fluid movement of an ag aircraft flying low over the horizon. Agricultural pilots such as the aerial applicators from [BUSINESS NAME] perform a variety of services that help [YOUR STATE’S] farmers increase productivity and protect their crops. Ag pilots (better known as crop dusters) will rack up thousands of hours of flight time over the course of the summer, the peak period for aerial application services. For ag pilots, this period of increased activity can be intense, but it is also perfectly normal.

Ag pilots are well-trained professionals who take their responsibility to protect the safety of their neighbors, employees, the public and the environment seriously. Agricultural aviation is a critical component of high-yield agriculture and is often the fastest, most efficient and most economical way to get the job done. Safety, however, is an aerial applicator’s top priority.

“Helping farmers provide a safe, affordable and abundant supply of food and fiber for the world’s growing population is extremely satisfying, and we are committed to doing it in a safe and efficient manner,” [NAME], owner and pilot of [BUSINESS NAME] said. “When a situation arises where those two tenets are at odds with each other, safety comes first—always. My pilots know this, and the National Agricultural Aviation Association (NAAA) constantly preaches it to the pilots in this industry. ”

NAAA educates member and non-member aerial applicators year-round about safety issues in the Professional Aerial Applicators’ Support System (PAASS) program.

“PAASS is a one-of-a-kind program in commercial aviation that educates pilots on aviation safety, drift minimization and security issues. It is highly regarded by the FAA, EPA, USDA and state agencies, and we encourage every ag pilot to attend the PAASS Program,” said NAAA Executive Director Andrew D. Moore.

Each year approximately 1,800 pilots, representing 1,350 ag aviation businesses in the United States participate in PAASS. The program benefits pilots by improving their understanding of human factors, enhancing critical aeronautical decision-making skills and emphasizing best practices. This proactive approach by the aerial application industry has resulted in ag aviation accidents falling more than 20% per 100,000 hours flown since the PAASS Program was introduced after the 1998 season.

“Even after \_\_\_ years in the industry, I learn something new every time I attend the PAASS Program and have become a better pilot because of it,” said [NAME OF OWNER/PILOT].

NAAA’s Fly Safe Campaign reiterates key safety messages articulated during the PAASS Program. Agricultural pilots receive regular safety alerts and reminders throughout the flying season. There are approximately 2,700 working ag pilots in the U.S. who flew 352 hours in 2010, on average, according to NAAA. That’s a combined total of more than 950,000 hours flown by all ag pilots.

As commercial pilots, aerial applicators must receive medical clearance before they can fly. Moreover, all ag pilots must receive a pesticide license from each state they fly in demonstrating their knowledge in the handling and application of crop protection products.

[OPTIONAL COMPANY INFORMATION] EXAMPLE *– [COMPANY NAME] has been in business in [NAME OF LOCATION] since 19\_\_\_. They treat [# OF ACRES] of local agricultural crops each year helping local farmers produce a safe, affordable and abundant supply of food and fiber both locally, nationally and globally.*

###